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Chairman: Mr. Al-Hinai ..... (Oman)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 112: Advancement of women (*continued*) (A/56/3, A/56/38, A/56/174, A/56/222-S/2001/736, A/56/268, A/56/279, A/56/306, A/56/316, A/56/328, A/56/329 and A/56/472)

Agenda item 113: Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century" (*continued*) (A/56/222-S/2001/736, A/56/306, A/56/319 and Add.1)

1. **Ms. Khalil** (Egypt), after expressing support for the statement made by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, reaffirmed that her country was determined to defend women's rights and to promote women's participation in political, economic, social and cultural life, firmly believing that the advancement of women was one of the foundations of social development. For some years, therefore, Egypt had been devoting itself to the adoption of legislative measures on behalf of women based on the national Constitution, which provided for equality between the sexes, as the decisive body of law enabling women to obtain a divorce.

2. Accordingly, a national council for women had been established in 2000 and specifically given responsibility for proposing policies to enhance the empowerment of women, to draw up a national project for the advancement of women, to represent Egypt in international conferences, to provide documentation and to organize conferences and seminars on issues relating to the advancement of women. The Council also worked to promote implementation of the recommendations of the Beijing Conference in the areas of research, health, population, poverty reduction and the participation of women in economic and social life.

3. In accordance with the recommendations of the Secretary-General, the Egyptian delegation advocated taking women's issues into account when drawing up economic policies and implementing programmes to improve the economic and social situation of women. Egypt hoped that the International Conference on Financing for Development, which was to be held in 2002, would emphasize the special problems of women. The wife of the President of Egypt had proposed that a trust fund should be set up for the advancement of women in order to enhance the participation and empowerment of women.

4. The Egyptian delegation underlined that it was essential to establish equality of access for women in all areas, especially research, training and information technology, and expressed regret concerning the difficult financial situation of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women.

5. Finally, she welcomed the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS adopted by the General Assembly at its twenty-sixth special session, which stressed equality of access to care for HIV-positive women and girls.

6. **Ms. Elliott** (Guyana), speaking on behalf of the member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), fully supported the statement made by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action had made a key contribution to the advancement of women in all countries and noted that the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly had drawn attention to the links between gender equality, sustainable development and peace. It had also identified 12 critical areas of concern and highlighted the new challenges posed by globalization, which affected women in particular.

7. The articulation of policy should be matched by the implementation of women's rights and it was regrettable that, despite the achievements of the previous few years, women continued to be disproportionately affected by poverty. Moreover, universal access to basic social services still had not been achieved in many countries, pregnancy-related deaths remained high and the gender dimensions of the HIV/AIDS pandemic had only recently been recognized.

8. Following the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action, CARICOM had identified six priority areas based on the findings of research carried out at national and regional levels: poverty; violence against women; health and related services; access to and participation in the definition of economic structure and the production process; power-sharing and decision-making; and the girl child. Since 1995, the CARICOM States had made considerable progress in those areas, in which they continued to pursue further measures. It was noteworthy that the biennial report of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), entitled "Progress of the World's Women 2000", gave

favourable ratings to the Caribbean concerning the participation of women in politics, the education of the girl child and women and the undertaking of gender budget initiatives. Moreover, in 10 of the 37 Permanent Missions of CARICOM States to the United Nations, at least 50 per cent of staff were women. Much remained to be done, however, to achieve the vision set out in the Beijing Declaration. In that regard, the CARICOM States had particularly emphasized the pursuit of legal reform in the interest of promoting gender equality. At the regional level, the CARICOM secretariat had prepared model legislation on issues affecting women in areas such as citizenship, domestic violence, equality in employment, equal pay, inheritance, maintenance and sexual harassment with a view to assisting governments in addressing gaps in their legal systems, as well as helping civil society and intergovernmental agencies.

9. At the same time, the CARICOM States had endeavoured to implement the conclusions of the special session of the General Assembly (Beijing+5). Among the initiatives adopted was the empowerment of women as a key theme at a meeting of parliamentarians from the CARICOM region, held in Belize in November 2000. In the following month, the CARICOM secretariat had organized a meeting of directors of national machineries at which a strategy had been agreed for mainstreaming gender into the work of the secretariat, as well as at the level of member States. The Nassau Declaration on Health, adopted in 2001 by CARICOM Heads of Government, had made special reference to the empowerment of women in the context of access to health services, thus recognizing the critical role of health in the economic development of the region. In addition, the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA) had cooperated closely with UNIFEM in order to better sensitize government officials and regional negotiators to the impact of trade agreements on women. The CARICOM States also continued to fulfil their reporting obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

10. CARICOM was troubled by the dire financial situation facing the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) and called on the international community to lend it support. CARICOM also welcomed the role played by the Commission on the Status of Women and by the Economic and Social Council and fully supported Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security.

11. In conclusion, she hoped that a gender perspective would be mainstreamed into the four important development-related conferences to be convened by the United Nations in 2002.

12. **Mr. Kafando** (Burkina Faso), speaking on behalf of the West African States, associated himself with the statement made by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. He was concerned by the critical financial situation facing INSTRAW as set forth in document A/56/279 and offered his encouragement to its secretariat and staff as they waited for the situation to be brought under control. As for the results of the activities of UNIFEM (A/56/174), the West African States, whose own activities for the advancement of women coincided with those of UNIFEM, hoped to benefit fully from the Fund's support in the future, particularly in connection with women's training and capacity-building.

13. Despite the essential role of women in African social life, the majority were illiterate and access to education was still very limited for girls. Maternal and child mortality rates remained relatively high despite scientific progress and the ambition of the World Health Organization (WHO), which had called for health for all by the year 2000. In addition, certain traditional and customary practices such as female genital mutilation continued to exist. Measures to eradicate those practices had been taken and the concerted action of certain countries and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) had appreciably diminished the practice of genital mutilation, one of the primary ways in which Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) was transmitted.

14. National policies sought to remedy those problems and took into account the growing role of women in economic development, especially in the effort to combat poverty through microcredit, which had increased considerably in recent years. In that way women contributed towards improving the standard of living of households and developing the informal sector. In rural areas, women's community organizations also participated in development and socio-economic activities, side by side with NGOs.

15. Data with which to quantify the contribution of women to national development, however, were not

always available and, despite legal instruments guaranteeing the integration of women into the development process, inequality remained the rule. In addition, armed conflicts all too often drove women and children into exile and exposed them to many violations of their rights. In the political area, despite the priority accorded to gender equality, few women acceded to positions of responsibility, owing especially to sociocultural realities, sexist attitudes and discrimination.

16. In the social sphere, the broad-based and ever more effective literacy programmes that had been launched were being accompanied by campaigns of information and consciousness-raising, education and communication regarding health, hygiene, family planning, fundamental rights, the control of HIV/AIDS, mutilation and violence. Inequality between men and women also existed in connection with HIV/AIDS, women being far more affected by the pandemic, which continued to spread. Its eradication was thus a prerequisite for the development and advancement of women.

17. **Ms. González** (Cuba) said that the situation of women throughout the world remained complex, especially in developing countries, where, in addition to war, famine, disease and other obstacles, the full development of women was hampered by external indebtedness, neoliberal structural adjustment programmes and the fallout of globalization. Women constituted nearly 70 per cent of the planet's poor, yet their participation in the economically active population was lower than that of men; at the same time, it was they who were the most affected by unemployment and who held the least secure jobs. Nearly two thirds of adult illiterates were women, and 80 million girls had no access to primary education. With regard to health, nearly half a million women died each year due to causes related to pregnancy, childbirth and abortion. The risk of maternal death was nearly 90 times greater in Africa than in Europe. In sub-Saharan Africa, life expectancy was 30 years lower than in developed countries. Generally speaking, quality of life among women was declining at an alarming rate and at all levels.

18. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the documents adopted at the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly continued to guide international action aimed at the advancement and equality of woman, and it was the task of the United Nations system, the relevant organizations and Governments to take up the major challenge of concrete realization of the strategies defined. Access to resources remained one of the main obstacles to equality, peace and development and had been adopted as an objective by the global meetings devoted to women, both in 1995 and in 2000. In the current unipolar world, enormous resources were squandered on the arms race, the cosmetics industry or advertising instead of being dedicated to progress, well-being and development, the consequences of which would greatly benefit women.

19. International cooperation that respected State sovereignty and the freedom of peoples was essential to developing countries, in particular, to supplement their national actions. Greater resources would have to be devoted to the various activities aimed at improving the status of women in order to put an end to discrimination and promote the advancement and well-being of all. For that purpose, a truly just and democratic international order must be established in which the countries accounting for the majority of the planet's inhabitants would participate on an equal basis in the decision-making process.

20. In Cuba, the status attained by women in society bore witness to the social progress made in the country. The experience of the Cuban revolution showed that a different lifestyle, more beneficial to human beings, was possible and that, within such a framework of conquest of justice and struggle for equality, it was possible to transform the condition of women radically and put an end to the discrimination against them. Thus, for example, the share of women was 33 per cent in positions of economic, social and political responsibility, slightly more than 66 per cent among technicians and middle and top management and approximately 42 per cent in scientific research. Maternal mortality was only 2.2 per 10,000 childbirths, and the life expectancy at birth of Cuban women was over 76 years. All those results had been achieved in spite of the coercive measures taken unilaterally against Cuba (with consequences that were particularly marked with respect to women), namely the economic blockade imposed by the Government of the United States of America on the basis of extraterritorial laws contrary to State sovereignty, international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

21. **Ms. Paterson** (New Zealand) speaking on agenda item 112, said that, despite the commitments made at the Beijing+5 Review, the Millennium Summit and, more recently, the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, a gap remained between words and action.

The Commission on the Status of Women therefore had a key role to play and at its next session should consider taking concrete measures to improve its working methods in order to produce credible results. She noted that her Government had hosted a United Nations workshop on the submission of reports relating to implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women by the countries of the South Pacific and stressed that that instrument should be ratified by all States. Her Government had ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention, as should all Member States, and had also contributed 100,000 New Zealand dollars to the Trust Fund for the Implementation of the Platform for Action created to support work within the United Nations to promote implementation of the Convention and its Optional Protocol and work on behalf of women, peace and security. In that regard, she said that Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) provided a good platform for mainstreaming gender into United Nations work on peace and security and urged the Fifth Committee to endorse the recommendations for the creation of new positions for gender experts in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO).

22. The United Nations policy for mainstreaming gender in all its activities had been significantly advanced by the work of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and that work should also be boosted by the decision of the Economic and Social Council to include gender mainstreaming on its agenda. Since equality issues must be integrated into all activities in order to achieve gender equality, all bodies of the United Nations system should make gender mainstreaming a priority.

23. Her Government had taken further steps to ensure that a gender perspective was incorporated into the policy-making process and her delegation had helped draft the resolution on improving the situation of women in the United Nations system. It was disappointing that consideration of that issue had been hampered by the lateness of the Secretary-General's report (A/56/472) and that the number of women staff with appointments of one year or more had in fact declined in 2000 but she noted that incremental steps were being taken towards achieving the goal of a 50/50 gender balance in the United Nations, with 14 departments and offices meeting that goal in 2000. She urged the Secretary-General to continue his efforts in that regard.

24. **Mr. Lee Ho-jin** (Republic of Korea) said that there had been much progress towards gender equality and that close cooperation between governments, international organizations and civil society had been essential. He was nevertheless concerned by the number of young women affected by HIV/AIDS and the continuing increase in mother-to-infant transmission. Recalling efforts in the area of women's fundamental rights, he noted that his Government had signed the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, with ratification of both under way.

25. With regard to the advancement of women, his Government had established a Ministry of Gender Equality responsible for planning, coordinating, enforcing and assessing policies concerning women, and for promoting gender equality. That Ministry had recently extended paid maternity leave to 90 days.

26. Turning to the issue of women and information technologies, he noted that 43 per cent of the Koreans with Internet access were women and stressed that women must keep abreast of developments in that area in order to become active players in a knowledge-based society. To that end, his Government was providing education and training programmes aimed at expanding the role of women. Housewives in particular had been targeted, 2 million of whom had already benefited from those programmes.

27. In order to counter adolescent girls' lack of interest in traditionally male-dominated fields, such as mathematics and science, his Government was developing specifically girl-friendly educational tools designed to encourage interest in science at an early age.

28. Much remained to be done, however, and his Government looked forward to partnerships with non-governmental organizations and civil society in order to strengthen its contribution to the advancement of women around the world.

29. **Mr. Rahmtalla** (Sudan) said that every society should implement a strategy to promote women's rights which took its special characteristics into account. Since justice was the underlying principle for all its political choices, the Sudan considered that society as a whole could not pride itself on enjoying all its rights if women and girls could not exercise theirs. Despite the efforts of the international community and civil society organizations, including non-governmental organizations,

the decisions adopted at the Beijing Conference concerning the elimination of all forms of violence against women and their empowerment had not been fully implemented. His delegation considered that States would be unable to comply with that obligation without outside help, and the relevant international cooperation should be increased. Noting that women who wished to establish small businesses should have equal access to the necessary equipment, materials and capital, he emphasized that developing countries and least developed countries, weighed down by the burden of debt, were unable to implement socio-economic programmes; moreover, some were subjected to economic sanctions or unilateral coercive measures. Steps should be taken at the international level to ensure that those countries, which were already enduring the backlash of globalization and were lagging behind in the area of technology and communications, were not entirely excluded from the international economic scene, with the resulting deterioration in the situation of their women and children.

30. The Sudan, which gave special attention to the status of women, was trying to integrate them into all sectors of society. The principal spheres of action were education, health, peace, the stability of the family and of society, development, and the fight against poverty.

31. The outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly constituted a step towards the improvement of the status of women and their empowerment in different sectors of society. However, the goals established could not be attained without the complete elimination of poverty and all forms of violence against women, particularly sexual exploitation.

32. Women, children and families were the primary victims of the wars and conflicts that were devastating the world and that were used by some to fulfil their economic and political ambitions. The Sudan considered that the accent should be put on human values and the natural structure of the family in order to establish a healthy, stable society, in which women could fully play their role, and educate the future generations. The arrogance of certain civilizations that believed themselves to be superior to others should also be condemned.

33. **Ms. Otiti** (Uganda) said that her delegation associated itself with the statement made by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

34. Uganda, where the majority of the women lived in rural areas, was pleased that various studies had taken into consideration the impact of world trends on rural development. However, rural women, with their ability to overcome adversity and contribute to the development of society, were particularly exposed to poverty, disease (particularly HIV/AIDS), and cultural practices. They required training in the skills that would enable them to advance. In order to enable rural women and all other women to occupy their rightful place, the political, economic, social and cultural factors adversely affecting them should be identified, and men should be made aware of the obstacles to their advancement.

35. Anxious to ensure that Ugandan women were able to enjoy their rights, the Government of Uganda was ensuring that they had equal opportunities for education, employment, health services and political participation.

36. The gap that separated urban women, particularly in the developed world, who sought to double their earnings on the stock market, from rural women, who merely aspired to establish a link to the market place, should be closed. Her delegation was pleased to learn that, in partnership with other organizations, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) was endeavouring to help women acquire the ability to ensure their own subsistence and exert influence in the economic, political and judicial spheres, and it hoped that Africa would gain increasing benefits from such initiatives. It welcomed the fact that UNIFEM was helping Ugandan women play an active role in their country's reconstruction.

37. The advances made by women could be set back if the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) was forced to reduce its operations for lack of resources. Her delegation considered that the Institute's Board of Trustees should allocate sufficient resources to allow it to conduct more comprehensive research activities. It commended the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women for the continued efforts to "support and monitor efforts to incorporate a gender perspective into the substantive work programmes throughout the United Nations system".

38. **Ms. McGrath-Triulzi** (Observer for the Holy See) reminded participants that the Holy See supported the Beijing Platform for Action, based on the recognition of the dignity of women, the establishment of strategies for development, the ending of violence

against women, and the access of women to employment, land and capital and to basic social services. Those objectives corresponded to the social values promoted by the Holy See as one of the major providers of basic social services to girls and women, especially in developing countries.

39. On the eve of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Pope John Paul II had called on Catholic institutions to renew and strengthen their commitment to the women of the world, particularly the most vulnerable among them. Since then, the world had changed greatly, as shown by the recent special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS, the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance and the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which had mirrored the current of international political discourse in the face of globalization. The family of nations needed to bestir itself and foster the moral and cultural values that would put the human person and human development at the centre of the process.

40. In order for women to reap the benefits of globalization while avoiding its negative consequences, it was important to recognize their dignity and their role in the family and in society, in order not to reduce them to mere economic agents. So as to enable women and girls to contribute to the architecture of a better world, their rights and fundamental freedoms, especially the right to marry and raise a family, to seek employment and receive appropriate wages, must be protected from abuse and exploitation. Lastly, it was indispensable to invest in basic social services, which constituted an essential condition for their well-being and their integration into economic development. To be actors in the changing economy, women needed to be physically and mentally healthy and possess suitable skills. It was therefore imperative that the education and health care of women and girls should be a priority in development programmes.

41. **Mr. Manalo** (Philippines) stressed that, while a number of States had instituted programmes and policies to empower women, many obstacles remained to be overcome for full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Much still remained to be done in order to mainstream a gender perspective in national, regional and international policies and programmes, so that women would cease to be the first to be affected by poverty and so that they could participate more in decision-making.

42. Although his delegation welcomed the role given to women in keeping and promoting peace in the world and in areas of conflict, it observed that women were still the victims of acts of violence that scarred them for the rest of their lives. National, regional and international efforts were thus needed to prevent all forms of violence against women. His Government gave great importance to the Asian Regional Initiative against Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children.

43. The Government of the Philippines had promulgated the Migrant Workers Act, to which provisions had recently been added concerning the mail-order procurement of wives via the Internet. The Senate was also reviewing a bill to combat trafficking in women and minors, which provided for severer prison sentences for offenders.

44. A Sponsor's Watchlist Information System had been introduced to prevent acts of violence against Philippine women by their foreign partners, along with a case monitoring system to assist Filipinos overseas seeking assistance in cases of trafficking and immigration. Lastly, educational modules on international migration and development were geared towards the prevention of violence against women migrant workers. His delegation was particularly pleased to note that those programmes were mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General (A/56/329). His delegation supported the delegation of Georgia, which had highlighted the need for international regulations and cooperation to safeguard the rights of women migrant workers. It would submit a draft resolution on violence against women migrant workers to the Committee.

45. **Mr. Gansukh** (Mongolia), having associated his delegation with the statement made by the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly still faced many obstacles. His delegation therefore considered that General Assembly resolution 55/71 and the decisions and resolutions of the Commission on the Status of Women provided a comprehensive and well-targeted road map. It also noted that, in the Millennium Declaration, international leaders had recalled that the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women were effective ways to combat poverty, hunger and disease and to stimulate sustainable development. Mongolia had been among the first countries to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of

All Forms of Discrimination against Women and had signed the Optional Protocol to the Convention in September 2000. It had presented its third and fourth periodic reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and duly noted the latter's recommendations in the context of its action to advance women.

46. Several factors influenced the situation of women in Mongolia, including poverty (which affected 36 per cent of the population), unemployment (42.4 per cent of the unemployed were women), education, health, social protection, culture and behaviour. The Government, in close cooperation with women's non-governmental organizations, the public sector, civil society and the private sector, had implemented a programme to advance the situation of women by improving their health and education and giving women heads of households access to income-generating activities. Also, in January 2001, it had adopted a programme to create an equitable social environment for human development, improve the quality of education and health care, alleviate poverty, promote employment and improve the living conditions of the population, particularly women.

47. Mongolia welcomed the support received from the United Nations system through the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Health Organization. It welcomed the UNIFEM report entitled "Women in Mongolia: Mapping Progress under Transition", which recommended, in particular, the review of institutional mechanisms for the implementation of the national programme for the advancement of women.

48. Mongolia had also benefited from the conclusions and recommendations of the expert group meeting on the situation of rural women within the context of globalization, organized at Ulan Bator by the Division for the Advancement of Women in cooperation with UNIFEM; participants had included representatives of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Bank. At the conclusion of the meeting, it had been recommended that Governments, research institutes and the private sector should establish the best model to ensure that rural women would be able to take advantage of information and communication technologies, in preparation for the World Summit on the Information Society. Since the conclusions and recommendations of the expert group deserved closer attention from the international community, his delegation would be submitting a draft resolution to the Committee with the other traditional sponsors.

49. **Ms. Mudie** (Australia) said that for more than half a century the international community had expressed its determination to improve the situation of women by adopting instruments and declarations that had gradually built up a solid international infrastructure for the promotion and protection of women's rights. Starting with the adoption of the Convention on the Political Rights of Women in 1952, and including the ratification by all but a small minority of States of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the international community had the necessary tools to guarantee political equality and empowerment for all women. There were still many obstacles to the effective implementation of those instruments, as had been recognized at the 1995 Beijing Conference and at the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly on women in 2000. On both occasions, a blueprint for action had been drawn up to overcome those obstacles and address the new challenges that affected the status of women, and it was the collective duty of the current generation of States Members of the United Nations to continue implementing the blueprint, to adapt it to the new unpredictable and challenging international environment, and to continue to move forward in the pursuit of full and equal rights for women.

50. At the international level, through the twenty-sixth special session of the General Assembly in June 2001, Australia had been proud to contribute to global recognition of the particular impact of HIV/AIDS on women and girls and the need to empower women to protect themselves from HIV infection. In 2000, Australia had participated in the Security Council's groundbreaking debate on women, peace and security and had joined many other States in applauding the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), which recognized women's critical role in conflict prevention, negotiation, peacekeeping and peace-building. Australia had subsequently made a significant contribution to the study on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, the role of women in peace-building and the gender dimensions of peace processes and conflict resolution, requested in resolution 1325 (2000).

51. In 2001, Australia had continued its efforts at the international level by coordinating the CANZ draft resolution on improvement of the status of women in the United Nations system (A/C.3/56/L.22). In a text which sought, inter alia, to strengthen the representation of women throughout the system, the sponsors invited Member States to identify and regularly submit more women candidates for appointment or election to intergovernmental, expert and treaty bodies and to identify and nominate more women candidates for appointment or election as judges or other senior officials in international courts and tribunals.

52. Australia was also keen to promote and protect women's rights in the Asia-Pacific region, where it had recently hosted a regional Ministerial Meeting on HIV/AIDS. The outcome document adopted by the Ministers had recognized that women were particularly vulnerable to the epidemic owing to their poverty and illiteracy, and that their empowerment was essential in reducing that vulnerability.

53. In addition, the Government had continued its efforts to empower women in the emerging nation of neighbouring East Timor. It had welcomed the results of the 30 August 2001 elections that had seen a considerable number of women appointed to the Constituent Assembly and to various key positions in the second transitional Government. Through its assistance programme, the Government was also cooperating with the Gender Affairs Unit in mainstreaming gender into government practices. It was also pursuing capacity-building activities in East Timor for women's organizations and associations.

54. The Government attached great importance to gender mainstreaming strategies for achieving gender equality and concrete improvements in the situation of women. Accordingly, in July 2001, it had supported a CANZ resolution at the Economic and Social Council on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system (Council resolution 2001/41). It had also actively supported reform of the working methods of the Commission on the Status of Women so that it might more effectively perform its catalysing role in that area.

55. Lastly, at the domestic level, the Government of Australia had developed an action plan for 2001-2005 to provide follow-up to commitments emanating from the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly.

56. Lastly, she wished to recall that in the context of cooperation which was vital to the realization of gender equality, Member States should make greater efforts to share with others the benefits of their experience and best practices.

57. **Mr. Gonzáles** (El Salvador), having endorsed the statements made by the representatives of Chile on behalf of the Rio Group and of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, stressed the importance that his Government attached to the advancement of women and to activities implemented at all levels to follow-up commitments emanating from the Beijing Conference and the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. National policy adopted in the interests of women was designed to mainstream a gender perspective in all sectors of national life. Cognizant of the huge task still to be accomplished in order to attain the objectives enshrined in the 12 priority areas for action, the Government had redoubled its efforts to follow up and assess its work, including through the monitoring of implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. It had also submitted its third, fourth and fifth periodic reports to the Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

58. The national body entrusted with coordinating policy on women's issues was the Salvadoran Institute for Woman's Development, which played an important role in rehabilitation of the country in the wake of the earthquakes of early 2001. With regard to violence against women migrant workers, the Government carried out comprehensive and multidisciplinary activities. The Institute had launched a campaign to raise awareness of violence in the workplace that addressed all aspects of the problem, from adoption of relevant legislation to institutional mechanisms necessary for strengthening the protection and promotion of the basic rights of women migrant workers, including women who came to work in El Salvador and Salvadoran women who emigrated abroad.

59. With regard to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Legislative Assembly had embarked on consultations with relevant national institutions and civil society organizations in order to amass the information that would enable it to decide whether to proceed to its adoption.

60. The Government of El Salvador welcomed the fruitful collaboration under way between the Women and Development Unit of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and other technical divisions concerned with various issues such as statistics, globalization, trade, the status of women, natural disasters and human settlements. Such collaboration had paved the way for the convening, in May 2001, of the first Statistical Conference of the Americas, at which it had been decided to establish a working group on parity indicators. It was essential that follow up should be provided to those significant initiatives in future assessments of the situation of women in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

61. The Government also wished to express its support for the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), particularly for its activities aimed at implementation of the new Gender Awareness Information and Networking System, which would enable the Institute to create, organize and publicize its activities for women throughout the world using new information technologies.

62. **Mr. Colby** (Norway) said that it was essential for both sexes to enjoy equal rights and opportunities if sustainable social and economic development was to be ensured; empowerment of women was the key to achieving that equality. Norway had every intention of contributing, both nationally and internationally, to ensuring that equality. To that end, at the national level it was concentrating its efforts on strengthening the Gender Equality Act and combating violence against women.

63. At the international level, the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS adopted at the twenty-sixth special session of the General Assembly stressed that equality and empowerment were fundamental elements for reducing the vulnerability of women and girls, which was further exacerbated by harmful traditional practices and sexual exploitation. International support for the education of girls was therefore vital. AIDS orphans were all too often obliged to leave school in order to care for other family members or earn their living. Although the World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, to be held in Japan in December 2001, would discuss the various aspects of the problem, preventive measures, including health-care services, were clearly needed to protect girls from HIV infection and unwanted pregnancies.

64. A joint project undertaken by the Nordic and Baltic countries and parts of Russia had sought the active involvement of girls and boys, which had made for a better grasp of sexual relationships and a discussion of gender roles.

65. The Security Council debate on women, peace and security was a step towards full and equal participation of women at all levels of decision-making and in the implementation of peace processes, including conflict prevention and resolution and post-conflict reconstruction. His country would fulfil its obligations under Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) which had emerged from that debate. It supported the work of the United Nations Secretariat, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) among others; it had supported DPKO's work on gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping operations and had participated in a study on the reintegration of women soldiers in Africa.

66. His delegation also welcomed the fact that the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia had for the first time defined sexual enslavement as a crime against humanity. It also urged Member States that had not yet done so to ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

67. Although the target of universal ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women by the end of 2000 had not been achieved, it should be pointed out that 168 Member States had ratified that instrument. His country asked those that had not yet done so to follow that example and urged States to withdraw all reservations that were incompatible with the purpose of the Convention. Where the Optional Protocol was concerned, the inquiry procedure had successfully supplemented the communications procedure.

68. His delegation encouraged all governments actively to combat breaches of human rights, particularly those that occurred in private life, such as honour killings and dowry-related violence, forced marriages, female genital mutilation and domestic violence. The United Nations World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, held in Durban, had shown that women were often victims of multiple discrimination and that their gender tended to reinforce various forms of discrimination based on racism.

69. **Ms. Quist** (Nigeria), associating herself with the statement made by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that in July 2000 her Government had adopted a National Policy on Women based on the 12 critical areas of concern established in the Beijing Platform for Action. It had also ratified a number of international conventions, including the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, and had signed the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. In that connection, Nigeria requested all States that had not yet done so to accede to or ratify the Convention.

70. Although steeped in tradition, Nigeria intended to fight the negative aspects of traditions that tended to subject women to odious practices and prejudices in marriage, divorce and widowhood. To that end, it had organized, in collaboration with UNIFEM and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), workshops aimed at sensitizing law-enforcement agencies, the judiciary and the media to the need to protect women from violence and harmful traditional practices. Some Nigerian states had already legislated against female genital mutilation. More emphasis on education should succeed in eradicating those practices, which, inter alia, increased women's vulnerability to HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. Early in 2001 the Nigerian Government had organized a workshop to devise a national immunization strategy. It had also allocated additional funds to the National AIDS Programme and was continuing its media campaigns throughout the country.

71. Nigeria had signed and ratified the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, and underscored the importance of international cooperation for an effective response to that form of crime. It fully endorsed the measures to combat violence against women migrant workers contained in the report of the Secretary-General (A/56/329), particularly the establishment of reintegration and rehabilitation schemes for women migrant workers returning to their countries of origin.

72. In recognition of the vital role played by rural women in agriculture, the Government had created a home economics unit within the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, and, within the agricultural coordination unit, a programme aimed at women in agriculture which disseminated information on production, processing and utilization technologies. It had also launched a poverty alleviation programme aimed in particular at establishing cottage industries. Women's cooperatives were also encouraged through microcredit loans to enhance income generation.

73. The debt burden had exacerbated the impoverishment of women and constrained the development efforts of many countries, despite such efforts at debt relief as the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries initiative. Nigeria believed that outright debt cancellation was needed to free resources essential to the development of the developing countries.

74. While globalization had brought unprecedented opportunity, it had led to further marginalization of developing countries and, combined with the effects of structural adjustment programmes, had led to greater feminization of poverty and undermined efforts to achieve gender equality. Therefore, innovative approaches must be found along with fair global rules.

75. Nigeria acknowledged the contribution of non-governmental organizations and looked forward to continuing collaboration with them. Adequate resources were essential at the national, regional and international levels to translate the commitments made by Member States into action.

76. **Ms. Yanagawa** (Japan) said that the Government of Japan, aware that the primary responsibility for advancing the status of women lay with each Government acting in cooperation with civil society, in particular non-governmental organizations, had launched in December 2000 its basic plan for a gender-equal society, founded on the Basic Law on that subject. Furthermore, as part of the reform of its institutions, a Gender Equality Bureau had been created within the Prime Minister's Cabinet, in addition to a new Council for Gender Equality. Currently, there were five women ministers, and for the first time, a female Minister for Foreign Affairs. In addition, the Law for the Prevention of Spousal Violence and the Protection of Victims had entered into force on 13 October 2001.

77. The Government of Japan attached great importance to the protection of women in armed conflict, since many refugees and displaced persons were women and children. It had contributed $120 million in assistance to the Afghan people. Believing that women could also play an important role in bringing to justice those who committed atrocities in the course of armed conflict, it welcomed the election of a Japanese member of the Committee on the

Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) as an ad litem judge of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.

78. The Government of Japan was funding programmes in such areas as literacy, vocational education, health care and microfinance through the Japanese Women in Development Fund within the framework of UNDP. It had also financed various programmes to enhance the rights of women in developing countries through the UNIFEM Trust Fund in support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women. In addition, a substantial amount of Japanese bilateral official development assistance had been utilized to promote the participation of women in development. Lastly, the Japanese Government had pledged $200 million to the global fund to combat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria that would be established in the near future.

79. **Ms. Afifi** (Morocco), endorsing the statement made by the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that concerted, multidimensional strategies and measures, calling for a mobilization of funds and a productive use of human resources, had to be adopted nationally and internationally in order to ensure equality between men and women and a genuine participation by women in development and the strengthening of peace. Certainly, the major international conferences and forums had helped to define the action that needed to be taken in that respect.

80. Despite considerable improvement in de jure gender equality, the participation of women was still limited when it came to political decision-making, conflict prevention and resolution, the economy, the environment or the media, and their under-representation was still more marked in the poor countries, especially in Africa, where women had been marginalized by various social problems, internal conflicts, the AIDS pandemic and the inadequacy of basic social services.

81. Since its independence, Morocco itself had made it one of the priorities of its development policy to improve the status of women, out of an awareness that only by integrating women into the process of national development could the country meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. For that reason, it had brought its legislation into line with its international commitments and had incorporated a gender focus into the objectives of its five-year economic and social development plan for the period 1999-2003, especially in the fields of health and education. That policy had borne fruit, because now a large number of women held various high-level posts. The national strategy launched by Morocco to integrate women into development was the result of a partnership among the different government departments and the various civil society institutions, especially the non-governmental organizations. In April 2001, the Government had set up an advisory commission to reform the family code. After much discussion several political groups had taken decisions to increase the representation of women within their party leaderships and among their candidates for local, regional and national assemblies, which, by the time of the legislative elections in September 2002, should enable women to be better represented at all levels.

82. Her delegation underscored the importance of the role played by the United Nations bodies dealing with the advancement of women and thanked them for their support and productive cooperation.

83. **Ms. Arias** (Peru), supporting the statements made by the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by Chile on behalf of the Rio Group, said that her Government regarded equal status and equal opportunities for women as a prerequisite for human development, and that it was the principle which inspired the action it took nationally, regionally and internationally to achieve greater recognition of the rights of women. At the regional level, the instruments and principles adopted in connection with the Regional Mechanism on Women of Latin America and the Caribbean, over which Peru was currently presiding, offered the basis for action on behalf of women. Moreover, on the occasion of the Americas Summit held in Quebec in April 2001, the countries of the region had reaffirmed their commitment to put an end to all forms of discrimination, promote equality between the sexes and achieve full and complete participation by all in political, economic, social and cultural life. Peru was determined to work within that framework to guarantee gender equality and enact a range of norms promoting national policies likely to ensure equal opportunities for both women and men in all fields, especially health, employment and participation in politics and society.

84. At the national level, her Government, whose main priorities were poverty eradication, job creation and the full observance of human rights, was studying

a plan of action for social justice and the elimination of poverty whose centrepiece was gender parity. It was working with international cooperation agencies and civil society organizations to develop a strategy to ensure the well-being of the Peruvian people based on literacy, health and food security.

85. In the area of health, the goals were to reduce maternal and infant mortality; reduce the proportion of premature pregnancies; improve services for victims of domestic and sexual violence and combat such violence more effectively; and reduce the incidence of sexually-transmitted diseases. Mention should also be made of a number of steps Peru had taken as part of its 1998-2002 national population plan, relating to male and female sexual and genetic health; greater equality between the sexes in the field of health; the sexual education of adolescents; and the right of men and women to make free and informed decisions about the number and spacing of their children.

86. A further objective was to reduce chronic malnutrition among children and guarantee food security for groups who were at risk or extremely poor. Specific programmes had also been designed to promote effective, equitable and sustainable development for vulnerable members of the population, particularly those who had been victims of the country's past violence.

87. The national authorities were assessing the needs of older and disabled women with a view to carrying out specific programmes and awareness-raising campaigns. Adult women often had less access to education and hence were less qualified for employment; they were therefore more likely to be dependent, as well as poor and susceptible to disease brought on by malnutrition during the later stages of their lives. The current Government therefore intended to follow a policy aimed at guaranteeing that they had access to appropriate health and social security services and enjoyed a decent lifestyle which would permit them to engage in physical, intellectual, emotional and social activity.

88. **Ms. Siddharth** (International Labour Organization (ILO)) said that, despite the strength of the international policy and legal framework for the empowerment of women, the signs of increasing female poverty were alarming. In many countries, the combination of unequal access to resources and negative global and local economic trends continued to endanger progress towards gender equalization. For example, women were paid less than men for equal work. The advances achieved in communications and information technology, which was the theme of the ILO World Employment Report 2001, offered many opportunities for women. However, such advances should be supported by policies which ensured participation, education and training, as well as family-friendly policies in the workplace. Between October 2001 and April 2002, ILO would be conducting its first gender audit to review the implementation of its gender mainstreaming policy.

89. ILO was pursuing a concerted strategy to implement the recommendations of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (Beijing+5). Women were not only a marginalized group but were also prominent among the ageing, youth, the disabled, indigenous peoples, refugees, migrants and those coping with HIV/AIDS. Poverty contributed significantly to vulnerability to the impact of HIV/AIDS and since women constituted the majority of the world's poor, they were severely affected by the pandemic. Their work in many countries, often in the informal sector, was characterized by the absence of income security, social protection, social security, property rights, access to health facilities and protective labour legislation. The ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work, which addressed the specific needs of women, had been adopted in June 2001. ILO programmes also aimed fully to reflect gender implications, extending to reintegration, reconstruction, demobilization of ex-combatants, the rehabilitation of infrastructure, training, microenterprise and the establishment of suitable social protection systems.

90. ILO believed that, excluding refugees and asylum seekers, some 90 million individuals worldwide, about half of them women, were migrants. The 1939 ILO recommendation on migrant workers (No. 61), revised in 1949 (No. 86) and 1975 (No. 151) addressed the working conditions of migrants and encouraged States to provide adequate sanctions against the abuses or malpractice to which migrants were subjected. The ILO International Labour Migration Database sought to record the flows of migrant workers and compile information on their living and working conditions, as well as on their treatment under national laws and rules. Since 1996, a specific mechanism had enabled ILO to review cases where female migrants were repeatedly exposed to serious and widespread violation of their rights.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.